

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please replace the sheet containing Figures 1 and 2 with the attached replacement sheet. The replacement sheet amends Figure 1 to add an HF-generator element 10 connected to connector device 5. No new matter is added as these changes to the drawings are supported by the specification.

Attachment: Replacement sheet containing amended Figure 1 and original Figure 2.

REMARKS

Claim 13 has been amended. Claims 1-12, 15, and 17 have been cancelled without prejudice. The allowance of claim 16 is gratefully acknowledged. Claims 13, 14, and 16 are pending in the application. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the original and new claims in this and other applications.

Claims 1-5, 15, and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, ¶ 1, for failing to comply with the written description requirement. Claims 1-5, 15, and 17 have been cancelled without prejudice. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

The drawings are objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a) for failing to show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Specifically, the drawings fail to support an HF generator as claimed. Applicant has amended the drawings to show an HF generator connected to the neutral electrode. No new matter was added. Thus, Applicant submits that the drawing are acceptable and requests that the objection be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 13, 14, and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,544,258 to Fleenor et al. (“Fleenor”). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Independent claim 13 recites an “HF-generator with a neutral electrode for high frequency (HF) surgery, the electrode comprising at least one electrically conductive section for contacting a patient’s body, wherein the at least one electrically conductive section is coated with a gel containing a circulation promoting agent as a circulation promoting means adapted to enhance blood flow at least through said body portion in contact with said at least one electrically conductive section and to reduce a contact resistance between said conductive section and said body portion.”

Fleenor relates to an improved return electrode. Fleenor discloses that the improved electrode of the invention includes an effective surface area so large that it eliminates the need for conductive or dielectric gels. *See* Fleenor at col. 4, lines 27-34. Further, Fleenor does not discuss

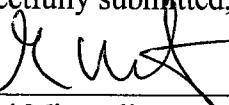
any circulating promoting means adapted to enhance blood flow. Thus, Fleenor fails to disclose a neutral electrode where “at least one electrically conductive section is coated with a gel containing a circulation promoting agent as a circulation promoting means adapted to enhance blood flow,” as recited in claim 13. Claim 14 depends from claim 13 and is allowable for at least the reasons mentioned above. Furthermore, the Examiner has indicated that claims 13 and 14 are allowable if the generator is claimed in combination with the electrode. Claim 13 has been amended to claim the generator and electrode in combination. Claims 1, 3, 4, and 17 have been cancelled without prejudice. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Fleenor in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,387,714 to Geddes et al. (hereinafter “Geddes”). The rejection is respectfully traversed. Claim 2 has been cancelled without prejudice. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

In view of the above, Applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance. Favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 
Gianni Minutoli

Registration No.: 41,198
Brian Parke
Registration No.: 59,226
DICKSTEIN SHAPIRO LLP
1825 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006-5403
(202) 420-2200
Attorneys for Applicant

Attachment

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REPLACEMENT SHEET